

Orange County Natural Areas Inventory

SEVENMILE CREEK/CANE CREEK MACROSITE

New Site 2004

Site Number: Macrosite #1

Size: 5,795 acres

Site Significance: Regional

USGS Quads: Efland, White Cross, and
Saxapahaw

The Sevenmile Creek/Cane Creek Macrosite provides a vital cross-watershed link between Cane Creek, which flows into the Haw/Cape Fear River drainage, and Sevenmile Creek, which flows into the Eno/Neuse drainage. The area encompasses a broad diversity of habitat types, from dry chestnut oak forest on high hilltops to wet bottomland forest and from a reservoir lake to rich mesophytic forest. Six standard sites are included in this macrosite.

The Sevenmile Creek/Cane Creek Macrosite is of regional significance. The large size of the tract provides sufficient habitat for wide-ranging species like bobcat, red fox, gray fox, turkey, and roosting black vultures. Several species are very local or rare in the lower piedmont, such as eastern chipmunk (*Tamias striatus*), blue cohosh (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*), and yellow lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus* var. *pubescens*). High hills at Camp Chestnut Ridge (E04) and Crabtree Creek Monadnock Ridge (E05) support extensive oak-hickory forests on slopes and mature chestnut oak forests on summit ridges. Sevenmile Creek Sugar Maple Bottom (E06) has the richest deciduous forest in the county, with basic-soil plants like southern sugar maple (*Acer barbatum*), maidenhair fern (*Adiantum pedatum*), a small population of the state-rare ginseng (*Panax quinquefolius*), and blue cohosh. Cane Creek and Sevenmile Creek are still relatively clean, as evidenced by otter and a state-rare mussel, the notched rainbow (*Villosa constricta*). A state-rare fish, Carolina darter (*Etheostoma collis*), used to occur where the Cane Creek Reservoir now exists and may well still exist elsewhere in Cane Creek. The macrosite provides breeding habitat for many neotropical migrant birds.

In addition to those named above, species rare in North Carolina that have been documented within the macrosite include eastern isopyrum or false rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*), last seen prior to damming of Cane Creek, and purple fringeless orchid (*Platanthera peramoena*), last seen in 1988 near Sevenmile Creek.